

EXHIBIT 8  
DATE 2-1-05  
HB County Commission



# GALLATIN COUNTY

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January 28, 2005

House Local Government Committee Members  
Montana House of Representatives  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

RE: HB 384

Representative Noennig:

HOUSE OF REPS		Date	# of pages
Post-it® Fax Note	7671		
To	KYANNE KELLY	From	Gallatin
Co./Dept.		Co.	County
Phone #		Phone #	Commission
Fax #		Fax #	

A majority of the Gallatin County Commissioners stand in opposition to HB 384. We have been appointing individuals to serve on the Gallatin Field Airport Authority Board for many years. This process has worked very well, as is evidenced by the success of the airport and the general aviation area. In fact, the Board has not asked for the 2 mills (approximately \$300,000 per year) they have the authority to ask for over a decade.

The Board operates under the same statutes that all other Boards and Commissions operate – in open sessions, allowing for public comment and attendance by any interested party. Any member of the public is welcome to comment on any and all decisions made by the Board such as fees that are set and rental agreements.

The County Commission takes the appointments to this board very seriously. We take the time to interview each applicant for vacant positions on this board, something that we rarely do for any other board. Our goal and priority is to appoint individuals with experience and interest in the field of aeronautics and aviation management. We strive to appoint those not politically or single-agenda motivated, but those that are interested in serving the region as a whole and those who hold the entire mission of the Board as valuable. Appointment to the Airport Authority boards allows Commissioners to ensure that those individuals making the decisions are of business backgrounds with business mindsets, and this is crucial to the efficiency and success of the airport operations.

Gallatin Field serves a huge group of private, public and commercial interests from throughout the United States, all funneling through a powerful gateway into southwest Montana in particular and the northern Rocky Mountains and plains in general. Gallatin Field is the fastest growing regional airport in the state. No single class of user is nor should be unduly influential. It is a rare jewel serving all Montanans, and many, many more – a truly economic and cultural “engine” second to none. “Stakeholders” in this airfield go way beyond the borders of Gallatin County. No less than five major international and national airline hubs directly and efficiently funnel citizens from all nations into this region. Politicization, self-interest, inefficiency and user-myopia must not be allowed to darken a bright and shining spot in the Montana economy.

Please take into consideration our strong opposition to the passage of HB 384. This is a self-serving bill that will benefit a few at the expense of many. We cannot risk this very important board falling into the hands of local politics rather than experienced, professional members representing the best interests of not only Gallatin County, but also the entire region.

Sincerely,

GALLATIN COUNTY COMMISSION

*William A. Murdock*  
 William A. Murdock, Chairman

*John Vincent*  
 John Vincent, Member

*Joe P. Skinner*  
 Joe P. Skinner, Member